UNESCO Regional Consultations on Open Access – Europe and North America
In cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO and the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO

20/21 November 2013, Magnus House, Berlin, Germany

UNESCO supports Open Access for the benefit of the global flow of knowledge, innovation and equitable socio-economic development. Its approach to the topic is human rights-based. Its Constitution, written long before the advent of electronic publishing, mandates: UNESCO should “maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge, by assuring the conservation and protection of the world’s heritage of books, works of art and monuments of history and science”. The UNESCO General Conference at its 36th session (2011) approved UNESCO’s strategy1 for the promotion of Open Access to scientific information and research. Participants of the UNESCO Open Access Regional Consultation (20/21 November 2013, Berlin, Germany) reviewed the strategy, reiterated its significance to advance the global open access movement, and agreed on the following recommendations:

Recommendations to UNESCO Member States, the UNESCO Secretariat and UNESCO National Commissions for UNESCO

1. While implementing its Open Access strategy, UNESCO should build on strengths of the organization:
   o Convening power
   o Global outreach
   o Multi-stakeholder approach including governments, academia, civil society and the private sector

2. While implementing its Open Access Strategy, UNESCO should lead by good examples and promote the integration of Open Access within the broader context of Open Solutions (Free and Open Source Software, Open Educational Resources, Open Data and Open Cloud)

3. UNESCO should contribute to standard setting in regard to Open Access

4. UNESCO Member States, the UNESCO Secretariat and UNESCO National Commissions for UNESCO should strengthen the understanding of the human rights framework for Open Access

5. While implementing its Open Access strategy, UNESCO should consider elevating the context of Open Access within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda

6. UNESCO in cooperation with national governments, civil society and academia should map competencies of Open Access actors in order to identify interfaces, ensure complementarity, and avoid duplication between activities of the various Open

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1 Link of the strategy
Access stakeholders

7. UNESCO in cooperation with UNESCO National Commissions, civil society, the private sector and academia should identify, disseminate and promote good practices of innovative Open Access publishing models, effective policies and examples of copyright law favorable to Open Access.
The following issues were further suggested to strengthen the implementation of the Open Access Strategy of UNESCO:

1) UNESCO should develop a standard-setting instrument on Open Access, especially in regard to quality assurance of scientific publishing

2) UNESCO and its partners should provide guidance and expertise on

   a. how to change the current reward systems, including the performance-based evaluation of institutions and researchers, by moving in the direction of a content-based evaluation process
   b. possibilities of measuring quality of publications and data and on inclusive criteria for the quality of journals and identify alternative evaluation mechanisms for universities which measure quality by testing the ability to reach thresholds of educational and research practice on the basis of openness
   c. the use of open data, especially in regard to ethical dimensions and privacy, and interoperability across disciplines
   d. ways of restructuring the current funding systems of research publications
   e. the long term preservation of records of science (UNESCO Memory of the World Programme)
   f. an interoperable network of repositories and publication platforms

3) UNESCO should support and make use of platforms of relevant actors to exchange information on

   a. Open Access standards, strategies and implementation roadmaps at national, regional and international level
   b. Open Access policies that are measureable and ways of following up on these policies
   c. accessible language to properly communicate Open Access to relevant actors

4) UNESCO and its partners should raise awareness for

   a. Open Access among development funders
   b. ethical questions in information and knowledge sharing
   c. the economic impact and other benefits of Open Access
   d. the economic structure of the current publishing system and effects it has on the culture of sharing in science
   e. importance of copyright for open access and the necessity to modernize copyright law to make it conducive to the free exchange of information, *inter alia* by exceptions for science, education and heritage institutions; for this last category the adoption of a Treaty Proposal on Copyright Limitations and Exceptions for Libraries and Archives needs specific mention that is currently discussed in WIPO is particularly important
f. Creative Commons licenses
g. cultural heritage being part of Open Access
h. the position, visibility and status of non-global science and science in other languages than English in Open Access

5) UNESCO should explore further cooperation possibilities with OpenAIRE, COAR, openaccessmap.org for updating the Global Open Access Portal (GOAP)

6) UNESCO and the European Commission shall further develop collaboration in regard to Open Access by jointly

a. guaranteeing an exchange of good practices between European countries and other continents
b. linking their initiatives to further regional bodies such as G8 meeting of science ministers, the Global Research Council, EuroScience, young scientists group of SPARC, the Nordic Council of Ministers and other fora for open access promotion
c. ensuring cooperation between national Open Access focal points identified by the European Commission and UNESCO National Commissions within the framework of Horizon 2020 and the UNESCO Open Access Strategy
d. involving young scientists to energize the scientific community and politicians in regard to Open Access